

Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association (FLEOA)
PROPOSAL FOR: U.S. HOMELAND SECURITY RESERVE FORCE

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This proposal calls for the creation of a federal homeland security reserve force that would utilize the services of honorably retired law enforcement officers and certain retired military personnel to help protect the United States during a national emergency or serious natural disaster. The primary purpose of a homeland security reserve force would be to dramatically increase physical security at federal installations and sensitive locations during a heightened state of alert and provide assistance in a post attack environment and during all serious disasters.

The rationale behind the creation of a national public safety reserve force is simple. Although a number of state and local law enforcement agencies maintain an auxiliary or reserve component, the federal government does not. As proposed, this reserve force is more of a security force than a police force since the primary function of this organization is to protect sensitive locations of national interest and not police America. Regardless of whether such a unit is called the Department of Homeland Security Reserve Force or the U.S. Defense Force, federal homeland security reserve personnel could be used to perform less sensitive but necessary duties so an additional number of active duty law enforcement officers can be reassigned to handle more pressing problems.

A DHS Reserve Force is a force multiplier that could help federal, state and local law enforcement agencies as well as the National Guard protect America in difficult times. According to this proposal, DHS Reserve Officers and Reserve Agents would be used to fill the gaps in our national security that exist because there are a limited number of law enforcement officers on active duty in the United States. There is also every reason to believe that a homeland security reserve force could potentially double or triple the level of protection at sensitive locations or in affected areas during a national emergency or serious disaster. The fact that DHS reserve personnel would only be activated during a serious emergency or a prolonged state of alert would significantly reduce the cost of maintaining a national homeland security reserve force. It should also be noted that a DHS Reserve Force is not meant to make the United States bulletproof in all regards. However, such a force will add another layer of protection to our national defense that does not exist at this time.

Creating a homeland security reserve force that is comprised of honorably retired law enforcement officers can accomplish three things. This organization can provide an infusion of highly trained and experienced retired law enforcement personnel who can help increase public safety and security services at critical locations during a heightened state of alert, in a post attack environment and during a serious natural disaster. This reserve force can also make the general public and our allies feel more secure in their relationship with the federal government. Lastly, the formation of a federal public safety reserve force would send a crystal clear message to the enemies of the United States that our nation was doing everything possible to protect life and property during a national emergency.

According to several high ranking federal officials it is not a question of if we will be attacked again, but when. As devastating as the attacks were on 9/11, consider what would happen if the United States sustained a hundred thousand casualties in a future strike or if one Stinger missile was fired at a commercial airliner flying in U.S. airspace? Regardless of the size or type of any future attacks the public safety services in our country would be overburdened beyond belief. Even in “unaffected” areas the threat of attack would place enormous demands on the law enforcement community and other emergency services. It seems only logical that in the worst case scenario a well organized federal public safety reserve force could provide valuable assistance during a prolonged state of alert or in a post attack environment.

In a number of applications deterrent forces have been effective in preventing acts of violence. It is just as important to protect the White House and the Capital Building as it is to secure our transportation links, reservoirs, military bases and other sensitive locations. It is also important to remember that having “local knowledge” can dramatically improve public safety and security services during an emergency. Placing retired law enforcement officers back into the community as Homeland Security Reserve Agents or U.S. Defense Force Officers should also prove to be more effective in certain situations than bringing in members of the armed forces.

Clearly, it makes the most sense to establish a reserve force under the Department of Homeland Security and assign reserve personnel to various agencies according to a national threat assessment. Although on the surface it makes sense to have retired law enforcement officers report to their former agency during a crisis, this may not always work when you consider the mobile nature of our society and the fact that not every retired law enforcement officer resides in the city or state where they were previously employed. Even some retired federal law enforcement officers live in locations where their former agency has no office. It is also important to remember that some retired personnel may not want to serve with their former agency. To avoid potential recruitment problems reserve personnel should be given a choice where and how they will serve. Every effort should also be made to use reserve personnel according to their training and experience.

According to this proposal, DHS Reserve personnel could be used to help the Office of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, The Bureau of Customs and Border Protection (Border Patrol) and the U.S. Coast Guard search for weapons of mass destruction, interdict terrorists at land and sea borders and provide an extra margin of security in our seaports, ports of entry and international airports. Reserve personnel could also be used to help protect federal buildings, national parks, national monuments, federal dams and reservoirs, bridges, tunnels and transit systems. We must also be prepared to increase security along the Mexican and Canadian Borders to prevent entry by any criminal element that would try to take advantage of an overburdened system. While putting military personnel on the Mexican border is a hotly debated issue no one should object to using honorably retired law enforcement officers as Homeland Security Reserve Agents/U.S. Defense Force Officers to help secure our southern and northern borders.

The Department of Defense should also be allowed to utilize the services of homeland security reserve officers and agents to help protect military bases in the United States. By using

retired law enforcement officers to help protect military bases the DOD could increase its force protection capability without having to rely solely on military personnel to police military bases. This would enable the Department of Defense to assign additional military force protection personnel to more frontline service in time of war. In addition, qualified DHS Reserve personnel with an investigative background could also provide assistance to Air Force OSI, Army CID, Coast Guard CID and the Naval Criminal Investigative Service. This would allow the various Armed Forces CID units to deploy a larger number of military special agents overseas.

Any location that has been attacked by terrorists is a crime scene that requires careful examination by highly trained investigators and forensic specialists. Retired criminal investigators and forensic specialists could help locate and process evidence that can be used to identify the perpetrators of an attack. The attacks on 9/11 also showed us that the job of searching for victims and evidence is very labor intensive. Retired law enforcement officers have the training and the experience to provide valuable assistance in a post attack rescue and recovery operation. A national public safety reserve force could provide additional help to sift through massive amounts of debris and provide security in devastated areas.

U.S. Defense Force Officers/Homeland Security Reserve Agents could also be used to staff vehicle and pedestrian checkpoints, patrol restricted areas and increase security on protection details. Retired federal agents and retired police detectives could provide investigative support when it is necessary to deploy a large number of experienced criminal investigators to conduct labor intensive searches and surveillances. Reserve personnel could also be assigned to command post duty to provide security and handle communications and tip lines. Retired public safety personnel who were previously cross trained as Emergency Medical Technicians could provide a valuable service during any national emergency. Retired law enforcement officers could also be used to patrol in remote locations to help protect power plants, nuclear reactors, fuel depots, dams and water reservoirs.

We must also do more to protect our private airports. It makes no sense to dramatically increase physical security at commercial airports and pay less attention to private airports, especially since terrorists have received flight training in private aircraft. As such, every effort must be made to increase ground security at private airports and prevent the theft and use of small planes as flying bombs. Retired law enforcement officers, especially retired federal agents, could also be used as Reserve Federal Air Marshals. By using qualified retired personnel as Reserve Air Marshals the Transportation Security Administration could provide relief to overworked Sky Marshals and dramatically increase the number of flights that are protected by highly trained armed personnel.

A DHS Reserve Force could also help increase the number of first responders by assigning U.S. Defense Force Officers/DHS Reserve Agents directly to federal, state and local police departments in cities where the terrorist threat level is high. The New York City Police Department, N.Y. Port Authority Police, New York State Police, Metropolitan Police and Transit Police in Washington DC as well as the U.S. Park Police, Capitol Police and Federal Protective Service could be the first agencies to receive this assistance. In this program Homeland Security Reserve Agents/U.S. Defense Force Officers could be used to provide facility security and perform other support duties to free active duty police officers and other law enforcement

personnel for more frontline service. This mission alone could result in the nationwide reassignment of a significant number of police officers to the field and dramatically increase the number of first responders in any given community.

A simplified or short form background investigation form could be devised to clear qualified reserve personnel for immediate assignment. Homeland Security Reserve Officers and Agents must be honorably retired law enforcement officers, have no criminal history and possess a valid concealed carry weapons license. This simple yet thorough background check could be conducted in a matter of minutes. A more detailed background investigation could be conducted for reserve personnel who are assigned to duties that require a federal security clearance.

Federal agencies that are authorized to utilize the services of homeland security reserve personnel could establish recruiting centers throughout the United States. Recruitment centers could be established at federal buildings, military bases and U.S. Coast Guard stations. One way to handle recruitment is to allow retired law enforcement officers to select the agency they would like to assist from a list generated by The Department of Homeland Security. For example, those who are interested in assisting the Coast Guard or protecting a military base in their community would report to the closest Coast Guard or military base where a military special agent would conduct a brief interview to confirm that the applicant is honorably retired, has no criminal history and is licensed to carry firearms. Retired personnel who wish to assist the Border Patrol could report to the closest Border Patrol station etc. Once the recruitment process is completed the applicant would be sworn in and assigned to a post of duty where they are needed the most. Another option is to have all applicants screened by a designated DHS agency and placed by request in either an active or inactive reserve status. DHS Reserve personnel on the active list would agree to be deployed at any time. Reserve personnel on the inactive roster would be required to attend periodic training but would only be activated in the gravest of situations. DHS Reserve personnel should also be given the option of making a full time or a part time commitment during a mobilization.

Whether U.S. Defense Force personnel are deputized as U.S. Customs Officers or Special Deputy U.S. Marshals, all reserve personnel should be qualified to perform basic physical security duties and protect life and property at locations of national interest during any terrorist threat, national emergency, state of war, or natural disaster. The passage of The Law Enforcement Officers Safety Act of 2004 authorizes honorably retired federal, state and local law enforcement officers to carry concealed firearms throughout the United States. Homeland Security Reserve Officers and Agents should be issued clothing and identification similar to traditional law enforcement attire and credentials. Reserve personnel could wear something as simple as police style Battle Dress Uniforms (BDUs). Even traditional police "raid jackets" could be worn by reserve personnel since the civilian population is very familiar with this distinctive form of law enforcement clothing.

Funding is always a concern. However, waiting until America is attacked again is not the answer. Although many retired law enforcement officers would be willing to work for little or no compensation during a dire emergency, the federal government should be prepared to provide DHS Reserve personnel with some form of compensation for their national service. Initially, compensation could be something as simple as a tax free daily per diem allotment to cover

travel, food and lodging expenses. Once funding is approved reserve personnel could be compensated in different ways depending on their assignment and level of commitment.

The retired law enforcement community represents an untapped resource that the U.S. Government could use to dramatically increase federal public safety and security services during a national emergency or serious disaster. The fact that there will always be a large number of retired law enforcement officers residing in the U.S. guarantees that there will always be a large pool of reserve personnel to draw from.

Some additional facts and observations to consider:

On September 11, 2001 four commercial airliners on domestic flight plans were hijacked and used in “Kamikaze” style attacks on civilian and military targets in the United States. As a result of these attacks the World Trade Center was destroyed, a portion of the Pentagon was damaged and a significant number of people lost their lives or were seriously injured.

Ever since the end of the Cold War the Department of Defense has become increasingly dependent on the use of National Guard forces to protect America at home and abroad. Operation Desert Storm and Desert Shield are prime examples of how a streamlined U.S. military relied on reserve and National Guard units to augment its regular forces during a large scale foreign deployment. During The War on Terrorism a significant percentage of National Guard troops and reservists have been deployed to protect the United States and serve overseas. If the United States was faced with multiple threats at the same time who would be left minding the store? The first reaction that most of us have is to say let the police handle it. Our second response is to call out the National Guard. This proposal asks the question: If a significant number of National Guard units are deployed overseas who will help the police protect America when certain events place unusual demands on the civilian law enforcement community? It should also be noted that even if Guard forces are available in strength to assist domestic law enforcement agencies, the National Guard is a military unit and not a police force.

Traditionally, National Guard troops have provided valuable assistance in the past. One reason for this was because the National Guard was available in strength. In some respects we have become dependent on this resource. Unfortunately, law enforcement agencies cannot be expected to provide the full spectrum of public safety services and handle the additional missions of responding to attacks and disasters while protecting the internal security of the United States on a sustained basis without some assistance.

Because the National Guard is more of an army than a police force it makes sense to assign U.S. Defense Force Officers/ Homeland Security Reserve Agents to work with National Guard units when they are deployed to provide a homeland security mission. An integrated force would help improve community relations and acclimate Guard personnel to the demands of vending public safety services during an domestic emergency. DHS Reserve personnel could also be used to provide relief to overworked National Guard troops, especially when the National Guard has been deployed for a long period of time.

Many people believe that the future is ripe for a variety of domestic and international conflicts to interrupt the peace. Others predict an increase in natural disasters. All that is needed to change the way in which our society operates is a terrorist threat or attack that is so devastating that it would be insane to go about our business as if the unaffected areas would be free from possible attack as well. Domestic law enforcement agencies can only do so much given the massive size of the country and the number of high risk locations that could be targeted by an enemy of the United States. Even if there was no specific plan by a terrorist group to target other locations that could certainly change overnight. As a result, the federal government is compelled to secure as many vital locations as possible. In the worse case scenario, a situation could develop where the United States could be burdened with a tremendous internal security problem that could change the way we live and diminish our capacity to wage large scale offensive military operations.

Natural disasters are another problem that can place a tremendous burden on public safety resources. The fire season was so severe in the year 2000 that retired personnel had to be recalled to service. In the year 2001 a battalion of U.S. Marines and U.S. Army personnel were used to fight fires in western states. In numerous instances federal officers, FEMA and military personnel have provided assistance during natural disasters. This assistance was provided because the assets and resources were available. What would happen in a situation where the bulk of our National Guard forces and the active duty military were committed elsewhere?

If and when the United States is confronted by an increase in terrorist threats, another terrorist attack, or some other serious national emergency existing public safety resources will be spread thin. Such turmoil would create inviting targets for domestic and international terrorists who would be prone to move against the least defended locations first. In less troublesome times state and local police are able to provide direct support to the federal government to increase security at sensitive locations during special events or during an occasional state of emergency. However, in the worst case scenario law enforcement resources may not be able to adequately protect the United States and provide a full spectrum of public safety services on a sustained basis without help.

Vending credible public safety services are critical to maintaining social order and protecting the framework of our American society. Certain locations that are crucial to maintaining the health and welfare and economic stability of the United States must be protected at all costs. Unfortunately, there are a limited number of federal law enforcement officers available to increase physical security at facilities and locations that are under the control of the federal government. Using moonlighting state and local law enforcement officers to provide additional security for the federal government is an excellent concept but it has its drawbacks.

It is also important to consider that the average federal agent, cop on the beat and deputy sheriff can only work a limited number of 12 to 16 hour tours of duty before they become exhausted and ineffective. Government officials need to remember that it is just as important to provide relief and assistance to law enforcement officers during a national emergency as it is to provide relief and support to our frontline combat troops operating on foreign soil. It is also very difficult for law enforcement agencies to maintain normal services while trying to cope with a serious emergency or periodic elevations in the threat level. Another problem involves the

condition of our privatized forces. The level of professionalism of our nation's private security forces runs from one extreme to another. Another factor to consider is how little respect most Americans have for private security forces.

It is difficult to imagine what will be required to protect the United States in times of serious national emergency. To bring things down to smaller scale consider what it will take to increase security in Arizona in a situation where the National Guard is needed elsewhere or the emergency is so serious that the Guard requires help. Arizona has several airports, a number of high profile military reservations, several armories, a nuclear reactor, Hoover Dam and a large land border with Mexico. Arizona also hosts several defense contractors that would be prime targets in times of national emergency, given the type of weapons systems that these corporations manufacture. Now consider what it will take to adequately secure important sites in New York City.

On September 11, 2001 the entire 40,000 member New York City Police Department, including other law enforcement agencies went on full alert. Off duty personnel were called in and the New York State National Guard was activated. Public safety personnel from neighboring jurisdictions and the federal government responded to provide assistance, as did local residents. U.S. fighter planes flew over the United States while the rescue and recovery of victims became an immediate priority. Public safety officials in New York City worked 12 hours or more each day for several weeks under tremendous physical and emotional stress with little or no relief or time off. Even with all that was done to lighten the load that was carried by public safety officials immediately after the attacks on 9/11; one can only imagine the level of support that could have been provided if the federal government was able to deploy a significant number of DHS Reserve Officers and Agents to affected areas. In addition to providing assistance to law enforcement personnel at ground zero, national public safety reserve officers and agents could have been used to dramatically increase physical security at commercial airports and other sensitive locations following the terrorist attacks on 9/11.

Should the United States be forced to re-institute a military draft there will be fewer candidates to enter the law enforcement profession. Even without a draft the law enforcement profession is having difficulties recruiting suitable candidates in some jurisdictions. Another problem involves the loss of sworn personnel in law enforcement agencies due to retirements. The New York City Police Department alone expects to retire several thousand police officers in the next few years. Federal agencies are also expected to retire a significant number of veteran federal officers and special agents in the near future. Under this proposal the federal government would recycle patriotic law enforcement officers who intend to retire but wish to continue to serve and utilize them in a reserve capacity.

Provisions already exist to allow retired federal law enforcement officers to serve in a reserve capacity without sustaining a loss or reduction of pension benefits. Retired law enforcement personnel would not require health coverage or benefits other than standard OWCP disability protection. Even medically retired and physically disabled law enforcement officers should be allowed to serve in a light duty capacity and could be used to relieve more physically fit personnel from having to perform less strenuous but necessary security and support duties.

If our future includes an increase in natural disasters, an increase in terrorist threats or attacks, or other threats to our national security we must prepare now. One way to dramatically increase public safety during emergencies and add another layer of protection to our national defense is to create a national homeland security reserve force.

As a result of the attacks on 9/11 and all that has transpired since then the United States may face many challenges in the future that will require a commitment by all Americans to help out in some way. A national homeland security reserve force can help protect the United States and give our citizens and visitors a renewed sense of security in difficult times. Ever since September 11, 2001 we are all painfully aware that history has a tendency to repeat itself. With this in mind we must act now to improve homeland security in America.

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